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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

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Young animals in America's woodlands are now running their annual risk of being kidnapped by well-meaning people who, finding them alone, mistakenly believe them to be abandoned, Dr. Ira W. Gabrielson, Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service of the Interior Department, said today.

"Every summer when the new crop of young animals is at the 'cute' stage, reports start coming in of people finding such animals abandoned by their mothers. Such stories very frequently center around young fawns," Dr. Gabrielson said.

"Cases of actual abandonment of fawns are very rare indeed. The mother deer customarily leaves the fawn where she thinks he is well hidden and goes off to graze nearby. The best thing to do when such fawns are come upon is to leave them right where they are found; that's where they belong. It is much better for the fawn to stay in the woods than to be turned into a bottle baby in somebody's backyard," Dr. Gabrielson declared.

Although young deer mainly are the victims of the good intentions of humans, many other young animals get picked up and carried home. Rabbits, foxes, many birds, turtles, and even skunks are taken into captivity.

Subject to an un-natural environment, and cared for by people who are inexperienced, no matter how kind they mean to be, the animals most frequently die.